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Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

5942nd meeting

Wednesday, 23 July 2008, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Le Luong Minh	(Viet Nam)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Grauls
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Du Xiacong
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Skračić
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Kleib
	Italy	Mr. Trambajolo
	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	Mr. Dabbashi
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Khalilzad

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2008/466)

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08-43530 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2008/466)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Somalia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jengeli (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Ali Ahmed Jama Jengeli, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Ould Abdallah to take a seat at the Council table.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the Permanent Representative of South Africa requesting that the Security Council extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Ramtame Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Lamamra to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia, document S/2008/466.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Ould Abdallah: This is my third presentation to the Security Council since taking office more than nine months ago. During my first presentation, on 17 December 2007 (see S/PV.5805), I proposed three options to the Council to address the Somali crisis. The first option was to continue business as usual, with massive assistance, including humanitarian aid, as we have done for the past 18 years. During the past 10 years, the official amount of assistance given to Somalia has been in the vicinity of $6 billion to $8 billion. That approach has helped to save millions of lives and should be commended and pursued. However, its side effects cannot be ignored, and it cannot be expected to bring lasting peace. Today, more than 3 million Somalis live in exile and more than 800,000 are displaced, and the violence continues.

The second option was to withdraw from a country where we have yet to make a significant difference. I know that it is difficult. Therefore, I advanced a third approach to try something different: simultaneous political and security action.

The Transitional Federal Government, the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) and civil society organizations agreed, at the invitation of the United Nations, to attend the Djibouti talks, which were designed to bring Somalis together to end almost two decades of violence. On 9 June 2008, the internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government and the ARS, which was considered extremist while in power in Mogadishu in 2006, signed the Djibouti agreement. Members of both groups are now here in this Chamber as representatives of a future stable Somalia. The Djibouti agreement was witnessed by a number of observer States and international

organizations, including France, the United Kingdom, the United States, the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the European Union, as well as by the host countries and representatives of Governments accredited to Somalia.

The working visit of the Security Council to Djibouti at the opening of the discussions was one of the most important contributions to the successful conclusion of the Djibouti agreement. The Council delegation, led by the Permanent Representatives of the United Kingdom and South Africa, made a decisive impact on the negotiations and on participants and observers during the two-day-long exchange with Somali representatives. I am grateful to the Security Council, and so are the Somalis. Everyone called on them to come up with a peace agreement, and the Somalis successfully delivered on that. They deserve the full support of the international community.

In all peace processes, some individuals or groups always begin by rejecting agreements. Effective implementation of the agreement should be an incentive to bring more Somalis on board and to give them a chance to contribute to the rebirth of their country. In that context, I would like to propose that the Council make a strong public expression of its support for the Djibouti agreement and call on Member States to give it a chance to be implemented rapidly. For their part, the Somalis have started working together, and today the ball is in the court of the international community. We need to act quickly.

The agreement will not bring peace overnight — no agreement has ever done so — especially if spoilers and freelance mediators, as I stated to the Council in my presentation last December, continue meddling. For a long time, violence has been pervasive in Somalia, and it will continue for a while. However, the agreement provides an opportunity to marginalize and eventually stop such violence. At the same time, a review of those on the Security Council sanctions list should help to recognize the role of those individuals who have decided to change their behaviour and to support peace.

Our priority should be to stay the course and follow through on the implementation of the Djibouti agreement. Such a development should provide security for humanitarian programmes — in particular, naval escorts for the World Food Programme, which brings 80 per cent of its food aid to Somalia by sea. Unfortunately, those vital escorts — initiated by France and then conducted by Denmark and the Netherlands — have recently ceased. I sympathize with the Somali nationals who constitute more than 95 per cent of aid workers in south and central Somalia. They risk their lives daily and have, all too often, been the innocent victims of targeted killings. With international determination, as shown in Kosovo and elsewhere, the individuals carrying out these terrible deeds should not be given a chance to prevail.

The international community must unite and show solidarity with the Somali people. It would be a terrible mistake to allow certain individuals to gamble with the future of Somalia and the entire Horn of Africa. Violence can easily spread across international borders. The continued neglect of Somalia poses a threat to international peace.

Today, our choices for bringing peace to Somalia are limited, but the time has come to make a final decision. The African Union Mission in Somalia has been doing an excellent job under extremely difficult conditions. The Council could consider re-hatting that force if that could provide the needed capabilities. Another option would be an international stabilization force, as indicated in the Secretary-General's letter of 20 September 2007 to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/762), who at that time was the representative of France. A third credible possibility for the Security Council would be the establishment of a United Nations peacekeeping force. Given that the Somalis have suffered for so long, and given the current favourable political context following the Djibouti agreement, it seems to me that it is time for the Security Council to take bold, decisive and fast action.

The President: I thank Mr. Ould Abdallah for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union.

Mr. Lamamra: I would like first to warmly congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the high office of President of the Security Council, and I equally congratulate and thank your predecessor for a job well done.

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the Council on the subject of Somalia, and I

wish to commend you, Sir, on your initiative to organize this meeting, which we believe will boost the renewed momentum we are witnessing in the mobilization of world attention. Allow me also to restate our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for his commitment and support and to commend his Special Representative, our colleague and friend Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, for his relentless efforts on the ground.

The presence in the Council today of an integrated Somali delegation led by the Foreign Minister of the Transitional Federal Government, and including some leaders of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia, is a very positive and strong indicator of their willingness to work towards the restoration of lasting peace and reconciliation in their country. It is also a clear message that should reassure the Security Council and the international community that Somalia is ready to receive and to lend its full cooperation to a United Nations peacekeeping mission. We urge the Council to fully take into account the implications of this very important act of unity aimed at achieving peace and security in Somalia and the region as a whole.

We note with satisfaction the growing mobilization with regard to the situation in Somalia as recognition of the window of opportunity created following the progress made by the Somalis themselves, in particular the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government and other stakeholders, towards the stabilization of the situation in their country and in furtherance of dialogue and reconciliation among all Somalis.

Those efforts culminated, first, in the convening of the National Reconciliation Congress in July and August 2007, which made a number of recommendations aimed at promoting an all-inclusive political process. That was further reinforced by the efforts of Special Representative Ould Abdallah and supported by the African Union through the convening of the intra-Somalia talks, which resulted in the Djibouti agreement of 9 June 2008 between the Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia.

As the Council is aware, during its meeting held at the level of heads of State and Government on the margins of the most recent summit of the African Union, held in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, the Peace and Security Council welcomed the new prospects for lasting peace and reconciliation in Somalia and called for support and cooperation for the implementation of the Djibouti agreement. We are pleased to note that other leaders and elements of the opposition in Somalia are recognizing and joining the agreement as a viable means towards finding a lasting solution to their differences. The agreement indeed provides for the establishment of two key committees — a joint security committee and a high-level committee — to both prepare for the consolidation of the ongoing political process and considerably to improve the security situation in the country. The implementation of that provision is currently under way, and the African Union is actively collaborating with the United Nations Special Representative in implementing it and other important elements of the agreement.

I would like to underscore the fact that the resolve of the Somali parties to commit themselves to key proposals, including the restoration of mutual trust and confidence, with the objective of ending the conflict, provides the appropriate opportunity for the international community, in particular the United Nations and the African Union, to further assist in the peace process. The African Union, which is currently on the ground through the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and other good offices of the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission, is prepared to use all necessary means within its capacity to assist the parties, in collaboration with the United Nations and other members of the international community, towards an effective cessation of hostilities on the ground.

Despite all the sacrifices of its leaders and elements, AMISOM is unable to fulfil its mandate because its strength is obviously grossly incommensurate with the scope of the real challenges on the ground. The Mission faces a severe lack of funding and logistical support. According to United Nations one-year standard estimates, its budget amounts to more than $800,000 for its logistics and financial and technical components. It is therefore crucial to beef up the Mission in order for it to reach its authorized strength of 8,000 troops, from the current level of 2,600, which constitutes only about 30 per cent of its total authorized strength.

In that regard, the African Union is embarking on a new troop-generation exercise amongst its members, and I wish to take this opportunity to express our deep

appreciation to the Governments of Burundi and Uganda for their continued commitment to the realization of lasting peace and reconciliation among all Somalis. I would also like to reiterate the request of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union for assistance for the Mission. While acknowledging the response of the Secretary-General to that request, I should like to reiterate our call for greater support for AMISOM from all other partners.

I wish at this juncture to draw the attention of the Council to developments on the ground, which offer a window of opportunity that is without precedent in the past 18 years. I therefore wish to renew the previous calls of the African Union for a United Nations takeover of AMISOM, a development that is also clearly wished for by the Somalis themselves as expressed in the Djibouti agreement, in order to achieve an accelerated end to the ongoing hostilities. In any case, AMISOM stands ready to be ultimately included in the international stabilization force provided for in the Djibouti agreement.

In my interaction with the Security Council delegation during its visit to Djibouti, I had the opportunity to suggest for further consideration the need for a strong naval component in the design of the concept of operations for the United Nations peacekeeping mission for Somalia, particularly at the early stages of the mission. That suggestion is informed by experience on the ground thus far. A mission with a strong naval component would also be a significant safeguard against ground attacks on the mission and would thus enhance the security of both the personnel of the mission and its equipment. Improved security at the maritime borders of Somalia would in turn spread a positive multiplier effect inwards to the rest of the country. That would be one way by which the security process would impact the political and humanitarian efforts, as has been recommended by Special Representative Ould Abdallah, whose focus on the need for the international community to act decisively and to act now I fully share.

Notwithstanding the difficult history of the past involvement of the United Nations in Somalia, we call on the Security Council to crown its consideration of the situation at this crucial stage with a resolution enabling the United Nations and the international community to deploy a robust mission and thus fully seize the current opportunity for the restoration of lasting peace and security in the country. We are all aware that any unnecessary delays may give room to spoilers to undermine our efforts and turn this auspicious occasion to build a better future for Somalia and the region into a lost opportunity. We must not — the Council must not — allow that to happen.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ali Ahmed Jama Jengeli, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia.

Mr. Jengeli (Somalia): It is my pleasure to participate in this Security Council discussion on the situation in Somalia. In that connection, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this meeting. We would like also to thank the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for their dedication and tireless efforts for peace and stability in Somalia. Similarly, we also want to thank the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations for their efforts.

The Security Council was first seized of the situation in Somalia in early 1992. Since then, there have been meetings, reports and fact-finding missions on Somalia. Today, it is not my intention to repeat the resolutions and deliberations of the past. However, by way of emphasis, I would like to concentrate on two important issues, namely, the security and reconciliation aspect and the humanitarian situation.

With regard to the issue of security and reconciliation, I would like to refer, as my learned friends who spoke earlier did, to the recent meeting which took place in Djibouti between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the opposition Alliance (ARS). As the Council is aware, and with its support and encouragement, a peace and reconciliation agreement has been reached and initialled by the TFG and the opposition Alliance. As envisaged, the agreement will be duly signed by the TFG and the Alliance in Saudi Arabia very soon. Both the Transitional Federal Parliament of Somalia and the Central Committee of the ARS have endorsed the agreement. Once the agreement is signed we will proceed to its implementation, and the various committees, especially the security and political committees, will be expected to function.

In the meantime, we are in a period of consolidation and expansion. Both parties have embarked on widening awareness of the agreement so that all stakeholders and civil society are informed and

enabled to give full backing to its implementation when it goes into effect.

We wish to stress that the TFG is fully committed to implementing its obligations under the agreement. We also expect the opposition Alliance to demonstrate genuine commitment to the implementation of the agreement, and indeed we are hopeful in this respect.

In this context, we hope that we are all in agreement that if the Security Council authorizes the deployment of a United Nations international stabilization force without delay, we will have ample reason to believe that the 17-year agony of the Somali people will draw to an end and that the world will be a better and more peaceful place.

We wish to point out here that, in our view, a force of around 26,000 personnel to stabilize Somalia, envisaged under a previous report, may not be necessary or feasible. Rather, we believe that a much smaller force under a United Nations mandate and with United Nations funding could do a good job under reasonable circumstances. Moreover, we believe that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) force that is already deployed in Somalia should be the nucleus of any future United Nations international stabilization force or peacekeeping force.

But, in the end, the Security Council may wish to decide on the actual size of any agreed force. We want to be on record in reiterating our resolve to do all we can to provide a climate conducive to the deployment and proper functioning of a stabilization force.

I would now like to turn to the issue of humanitarian assistance. Based on the information that we have, a substantial amount of assistance is required in the coming months. But we recognize, at the outset, that there is a very close linkage between security and reconciliation and humanitarian needs. An improvement in the security situation will definitely have a positive impact on the humanitarian situation and vice versa.

Therefore, the strategic direction of our future efforts should focus on the political and security fronts so that a more stable and secure environment is created for emergency humanitarian and other operations. Moreover, the window of opportunity that currently exists on the political front should be taken advantage of in order to save millions of Somalis from the utter devastation of conflict, drought and other man-made and natural calamities.

In this respect, I would like to reiterate our sadness and sorrow at the deliberate killings and abductions of humanitarian workers, who are doing heroic work under difficult and demanding conditions. Our Government and people will, as a matter of priority, pursue these criminal elements so as to bring them to justice.

I wish to appeal to the Security Council to address in a forthright and urgent manner the issue of impunity for crimes committed against the Somali people. Indeed, the Somali people are grateful for the tentative steps that the Council have already taken in that direction. But much more needs to be done in this regard.

In conclusion, we have good reason to be positive and optimistic about the future of Somalia. A lot depends on the people of Somalia and their leaders. Also, a lot depends on the quality, relevance, quantity and timeliness of the assistance provided by the Security Council and the international community. We very much hope that the idea of an adequate United Nations stabilization force will receive a major push forward at this meeting of the Security Council.

We very much look forward to the day when we can secure stability and peace in Somalia so that the major task of rehabilitating, reconstructing and developing Somalia can begin in earnest. Indeed, the decisions that will be made here in the coming weeks will have a profound impact on that becoming a reality.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I would like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.